

2008 DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY SURVEY

*Conducted by the City of Milwaukee
Department of City Development*

January 17th to May 7th 2008

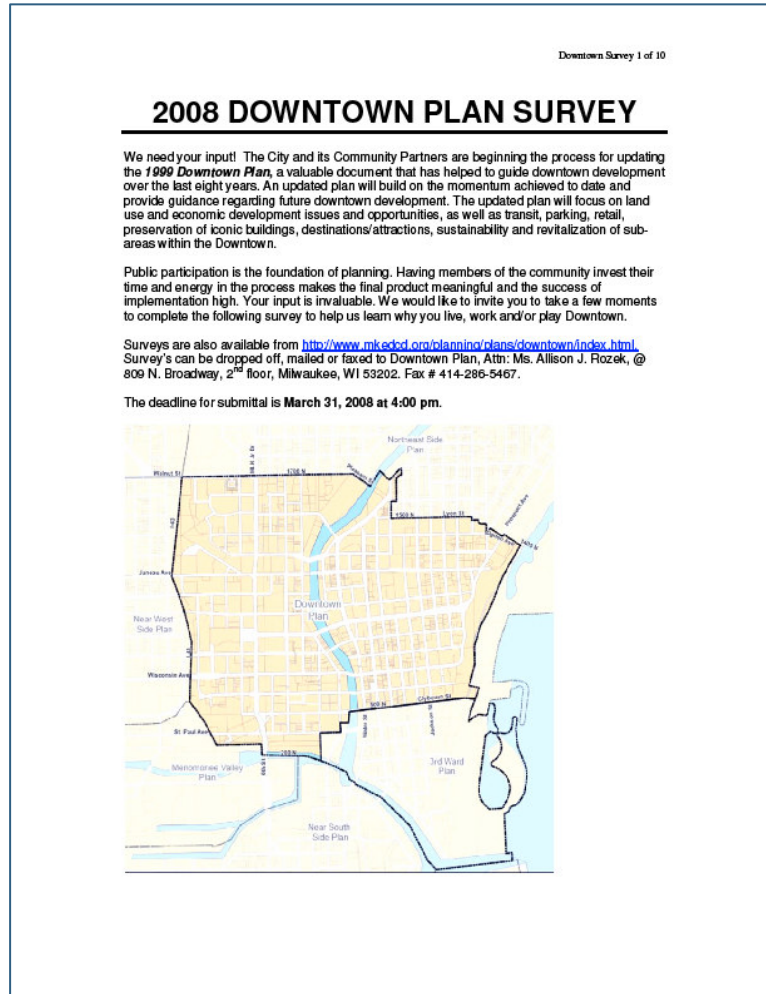


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The Survey



- In preparation of updating the 1999 Downtown Plan, the City of Milwaukee implemented the 2008 Downtown Community Survey.
- The survey included 57 questions focusing on housing preference, employment opportunities, recreational facilities, building treatment, public safety, transportation and parking. An opportunity to provide additional open-ended comments was also made available.
- The survey was posted on the internet and could be completed through online software or mailed to the Department of City Development (DCD). Paper Copies were also distributed at the Downtown Plan kick-off open house.
- Advertising for the Survey included an ad in *The Business Journal of Milwaukee*, flyers posted and distributed by the Downtown Public Service Ambassadors and displays in various public locations such as the Shops of Grand Avenue, and the Milwaukee Public Museum.

The Downtown Community Survey was open to all members of the public and does not represent a scientific sample of the population.

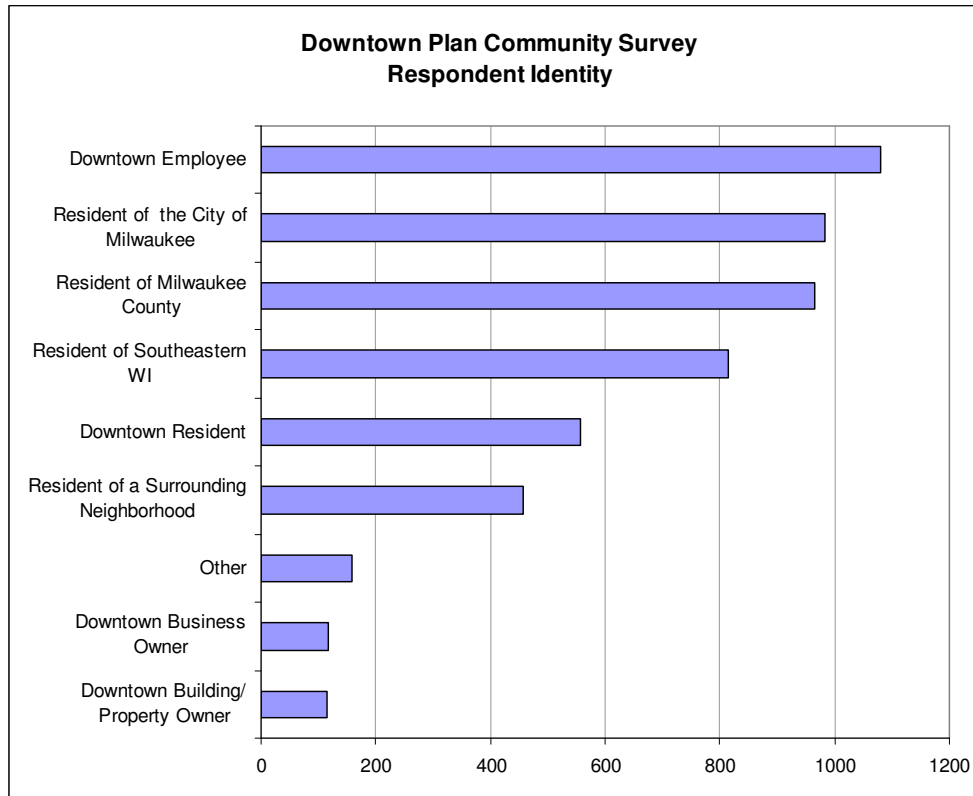
The Survey



- In total, 2,440 surveys were completed between Tuesday, January 17th, 2008 and Wednesday, May 7th, 2008.
- Survey results indicated a large number of respondents were directed to the survey through neighborhood associations, employers, and educators. Articles were featured in the *Small Business Times* and *OnMilwaukee.com*, as well as mentioned on Milwaukee Public Television.
- The Downtown Community Survey should not be considered a comprehensive account of public opinion, and will not be the only opportunity for public input into the planning process. However, the survey does offer some insight into certain issues and opportunities that should be addressed in the Downtown Plan Update.

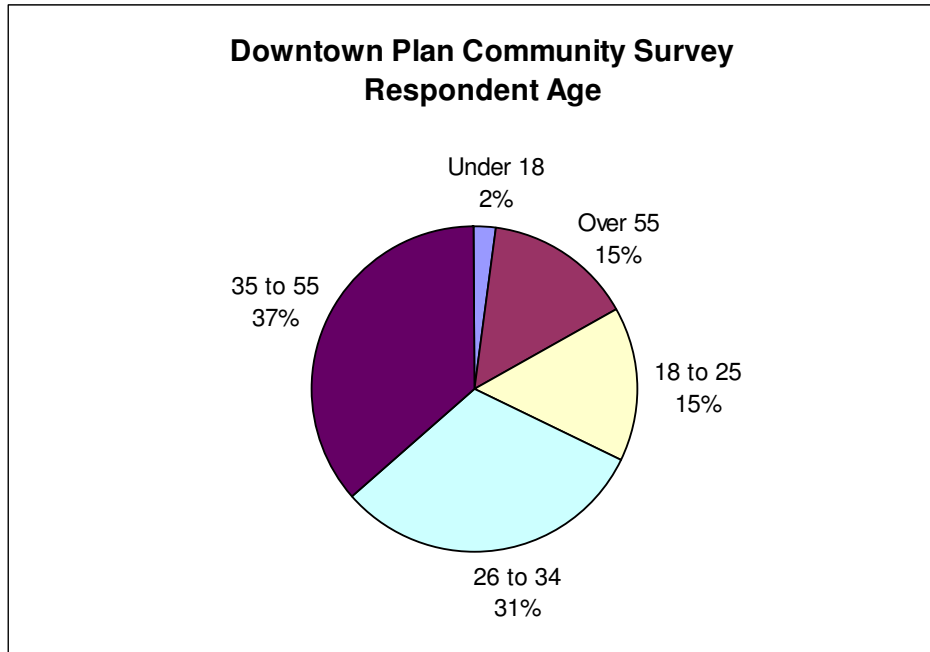
2008 DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Respondent Characteristics



- 2,440 people responded to the survey.
- 44% identified themselves as downtown employees.
- 23% said they were downtown residents. 64% reported that they lived within the City of Milwaukee, and 78% of respondents lived within Milwaukee County.
- 89% of respondents reported that they lived in SE Wisconsin. The remaining 11% lived outside SE Wisconsin or did not report a place of residence.
- 25% of respondents lived in SE Wisconsin but outside of the City of Milwaukee. These respondents are referred to as “suburban residents.”
- Nearly 54% of the survey respondents were male.

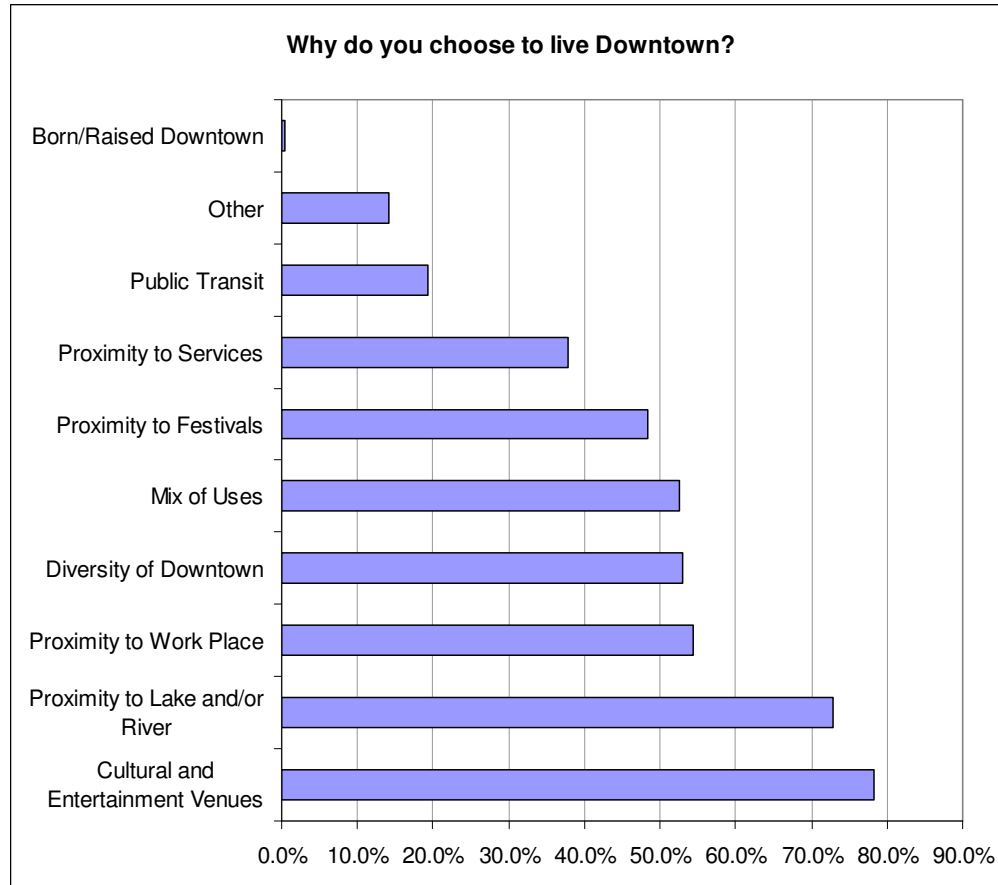
Respondent Characteristics



- Over 68% of the respondents said they were 26 years of age or older. The 2006 American Community Survey estimated just under 66% of the Milwaukee County population to be 25 years of age or older.
- Only 2% of the survey respondents said they were under the age of 18.
- Compared to downtown and the suburbs, a smaller percent of city households identified an income greater than \$100,000 (28%). However, downtown residents identified a higher percentage of household incomes below \$25,000 (11%). This is most likely due to a large number of young, single person households, and students living downtown.
- 70% of respondents who identified themselves as downtown residents are 34 years of age or younger.

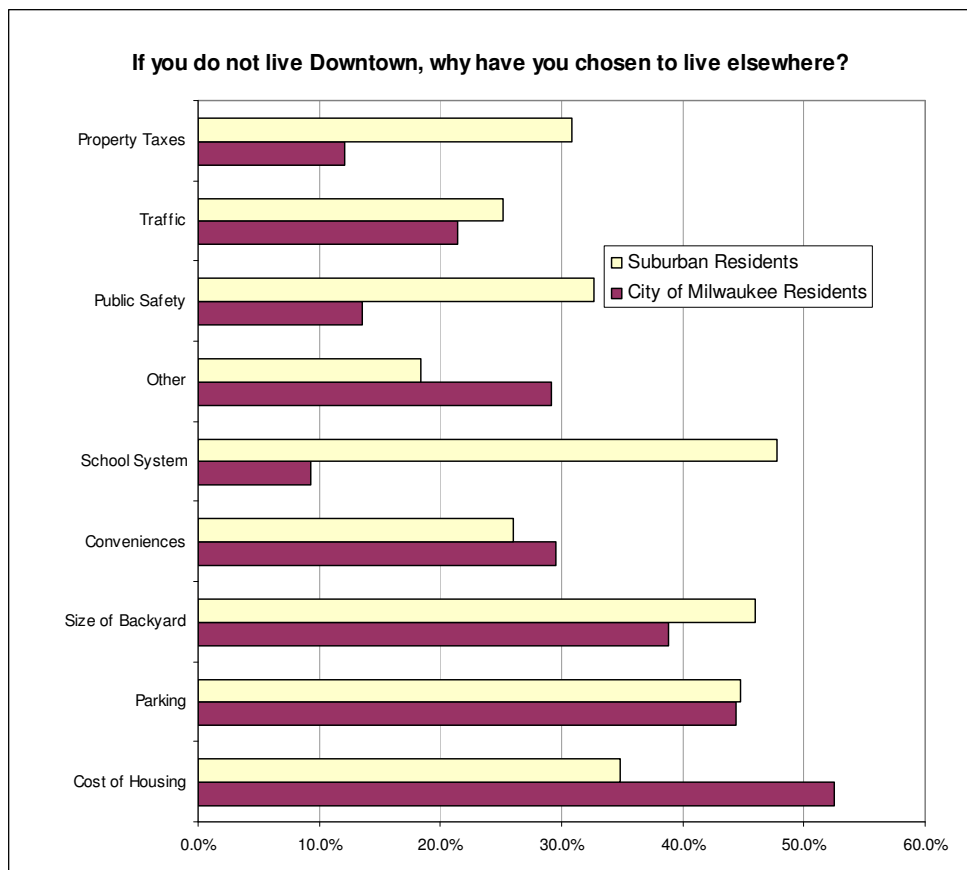
2008 DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Downtown Living



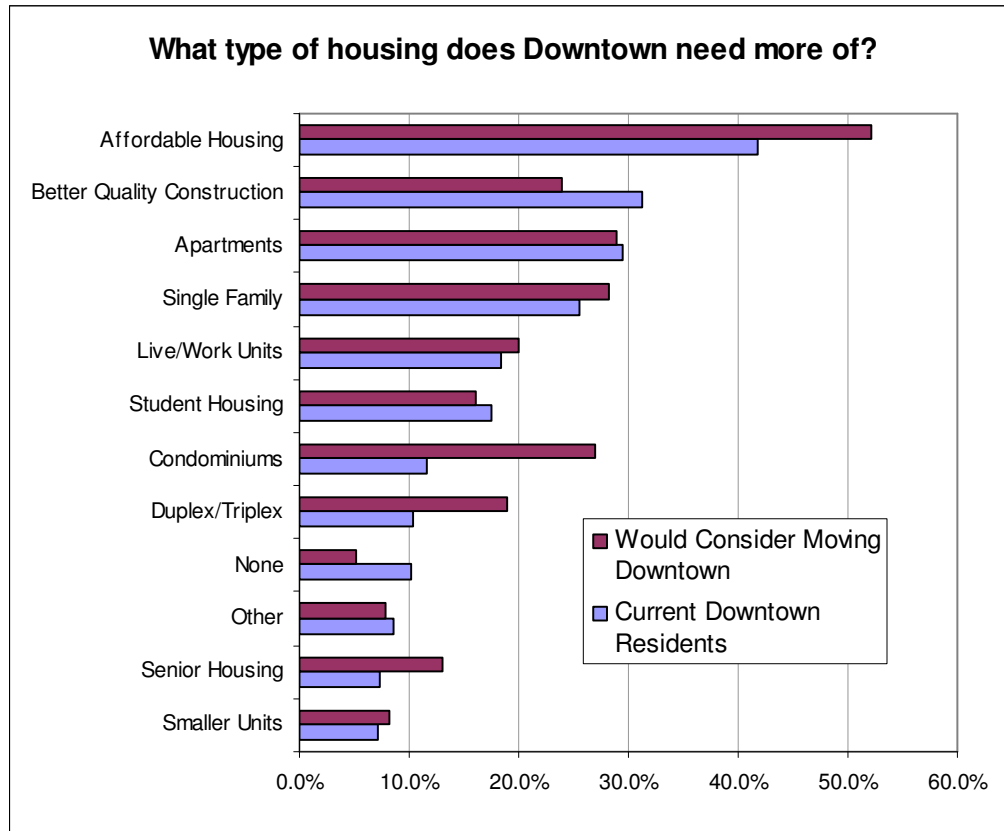
- 91% of downtown residents who responded to the survey lived in one or two person households
- 97% of respondents who lived downtown had no children.
- Just over 47% of downtown residents who responded to the survey reported currently living in an apartment.
- 70% of downtown residents who responded to the survey have lived in their current residence for less than 3 years. This is the case for only 36% of city residents and 28% of suburban residents.
- 43% of downtown residents said they owned their own home, compared to 75% who live in other parts of the city and 84% of those who live outside the city.
- Most respondents who were downtown residents and owned their homes live in condominiums.
- 4% of surveyed downtown residents reported living in a single-family home.

Downtown Living



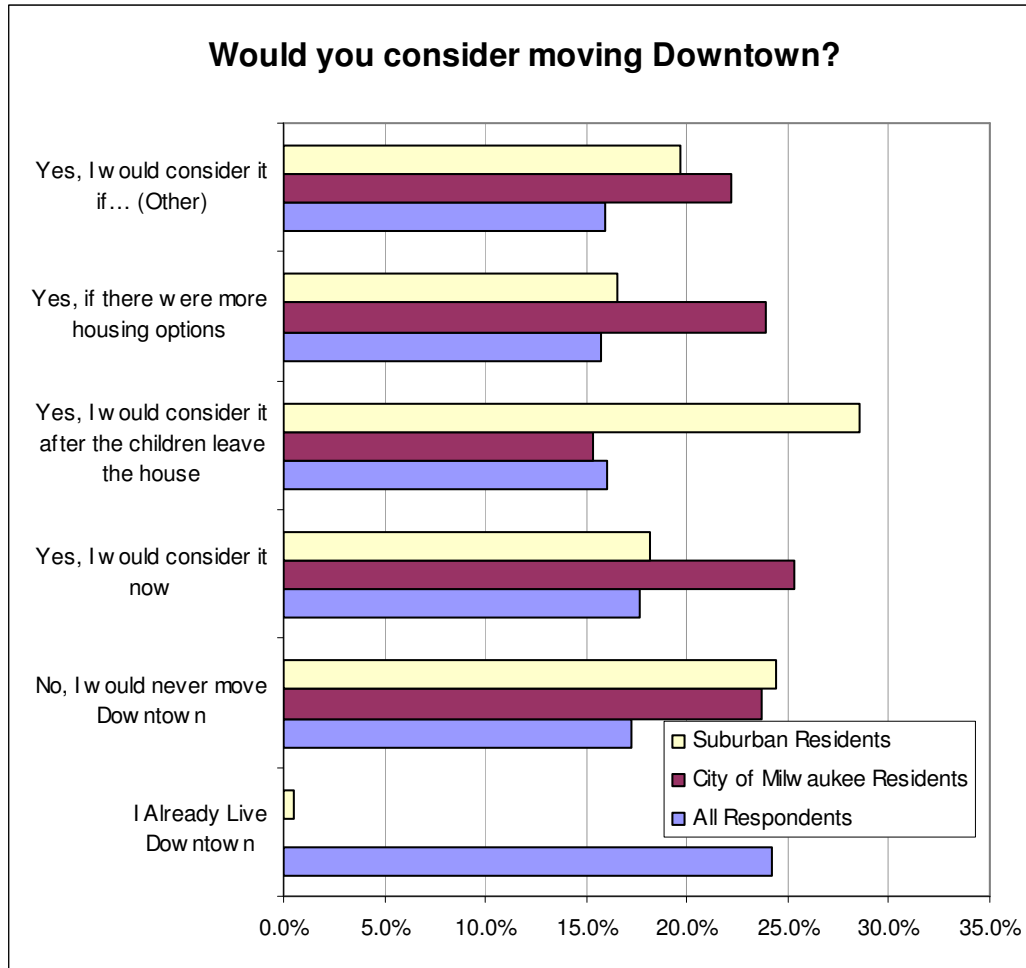
- According to survey respondents, the top reasons for living downtown are the cultural and entertainment venues (78%) and the proximity to the lake/river (73%). Other top responses were proximity to work places (54%), the diversity of downtown (53%), and the mix of uses present (53%).
- Top reasons for not living downtown were the cost of housing, limited parking and a lack of backyard space.
- The school system and property taxes were less important to respondents who already lived within the city of Milwaukee.
- Cost of housing was a bigger issue for City of Milwaukee residents than for suburban residents.
- Over 52% of respondents who lived in the City of Milwaukee listed affordability as a reason for not living downtown.

Downtown Living



- 46% of respondents said downtown needs more affordable housing, although respondents may have different ideas of what “affordable” means.
- Downtown residents also identified a desire for better quality construction, while city and suburban residents would like to see more single family homes.
- Suburban respondents generally have higher household incomes (49% over \$100,000), but still list affordability as a factor for not living downtown. This may reflect a desire for housing that is not necessarily more affordable in general, but more affordable by square foot. Suburban residents seem to be able to afford downtown living, but would prefer to pay the same for a larger home.

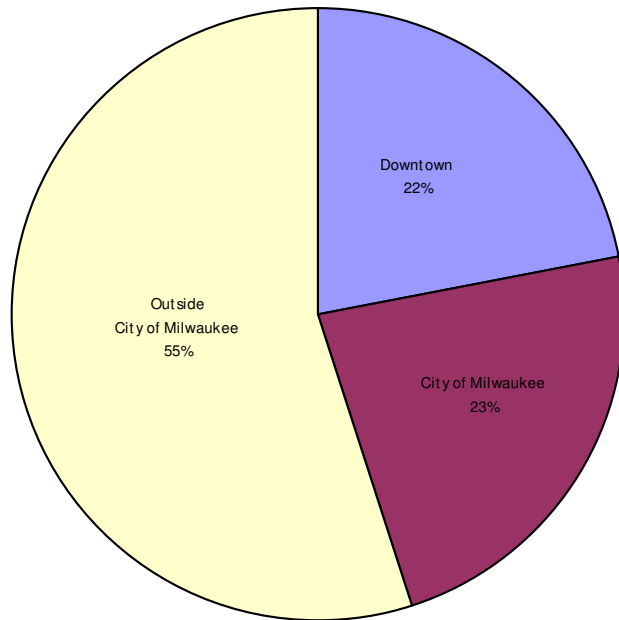
Downtown Living



- Over 25% of city residents and 21% of suburban residents said they would consider moving downtown now. These respondents generally resembled the current downtown population. Over 57% are under the age of 34 and 45% are current downtown employees. Over 76% live in one or two person households. Nearly 86% have no children and 34% reported a household income over \$100,000.
- 68% of potential residents own their own home, suggesting great potential for continued condominium absorption.
- Over 28% of suburban respondents said they would consider moving downtown after their children have left the home.
- 16% of those that would consider moving to downtown now are over the age of 55.

Downtown Employment

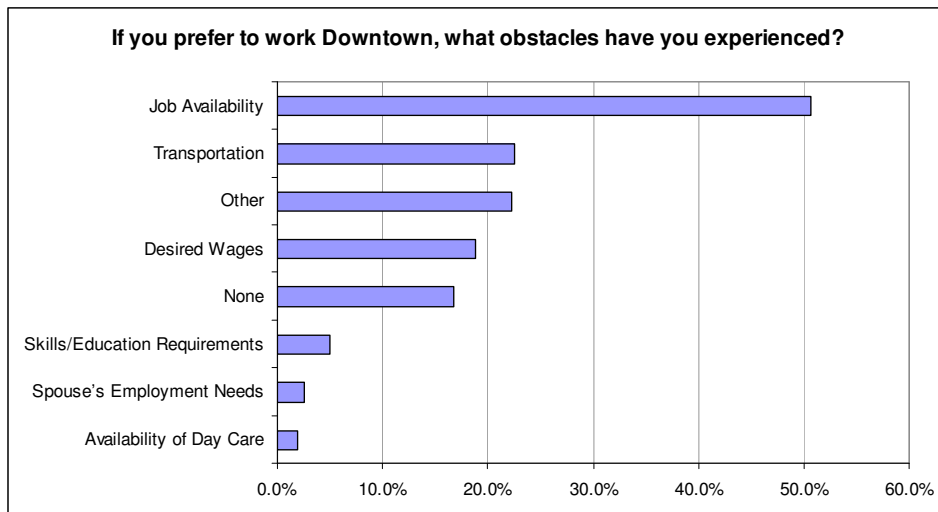
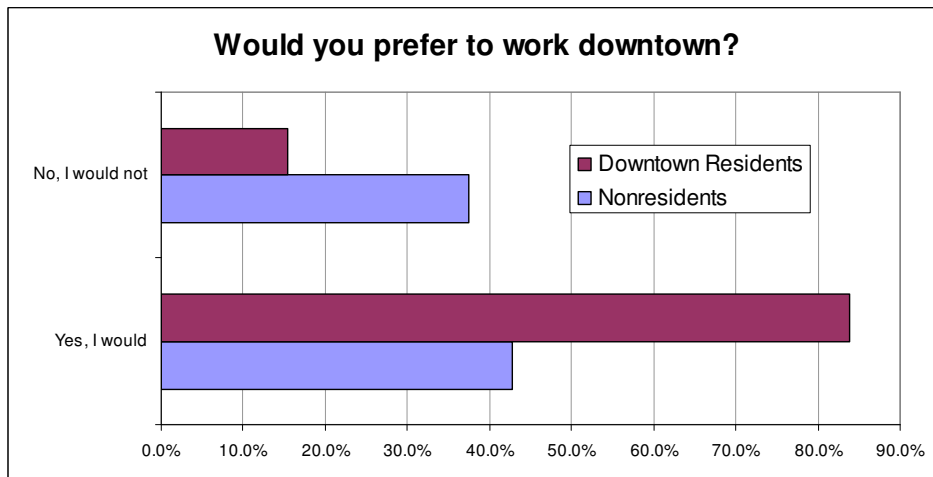
If you work downtown, where do you live?



- 44% of survey respondents indicated that they worked downtown.
- 22% of downtown employees identified themselves as downtown residents and 45% as residents of the City of Milwaukee.
- 55% of downtown employees surveyed commute to work from outside of the City of Milwaukee.
- Of those who live and work downtown, 65% are under the age of 34. The same is true of only 39% of downtown employees who live elsewhere.
- Of downtown residents who did not identify themselves as downtown employees, 37% are between the ages of 18 and 34.
- 96% of those who live and work downtown do not have children. This is true of only 66% of downtown employees who live elsewhere.

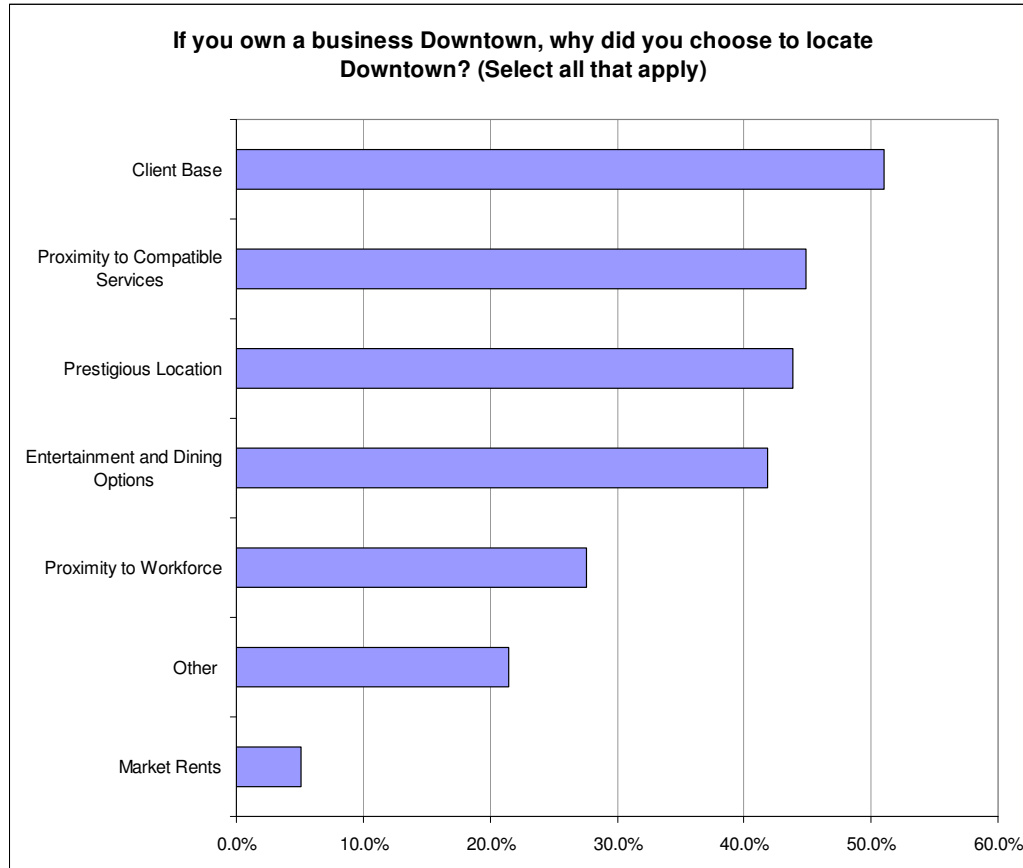
2008 DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Downtown Employment



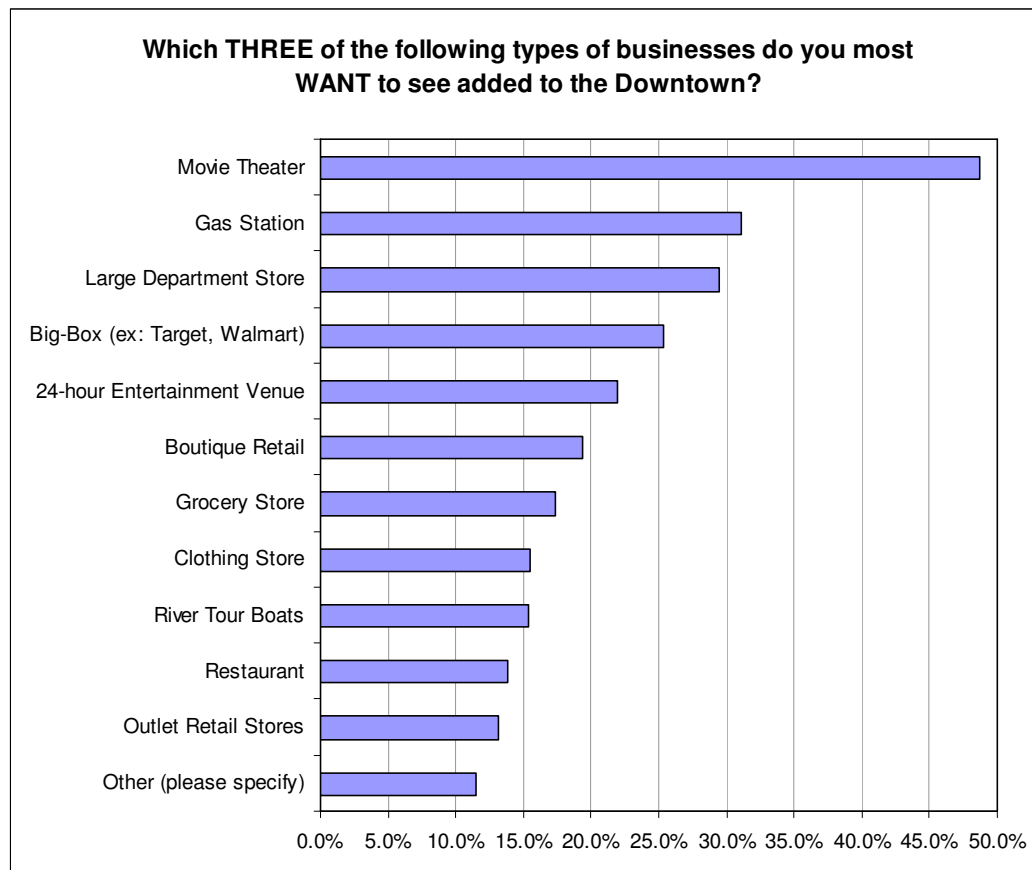
- 16% of downtown employees who live outside of downtown said they would prefer to work in a different location. Only 6% of those who live and work downtown said the same.
- 85% of those who work downtown prefer to work downtown.
- As for the small number of downtown residents who do not work downtown, 84% said they would like to.
- Job availability (52%) and transportation (25%) have been their most common obstacles to finding employment downtown. However, 19% reported that nothing has kept them from finding employment downtown.
- Those who live and work downtown tend to have a lower household income than those who work downtown and live elsewhere. Nearly 34% of those who live and work downtown have a household income of less than \$50,000.

Downtown Business and Development



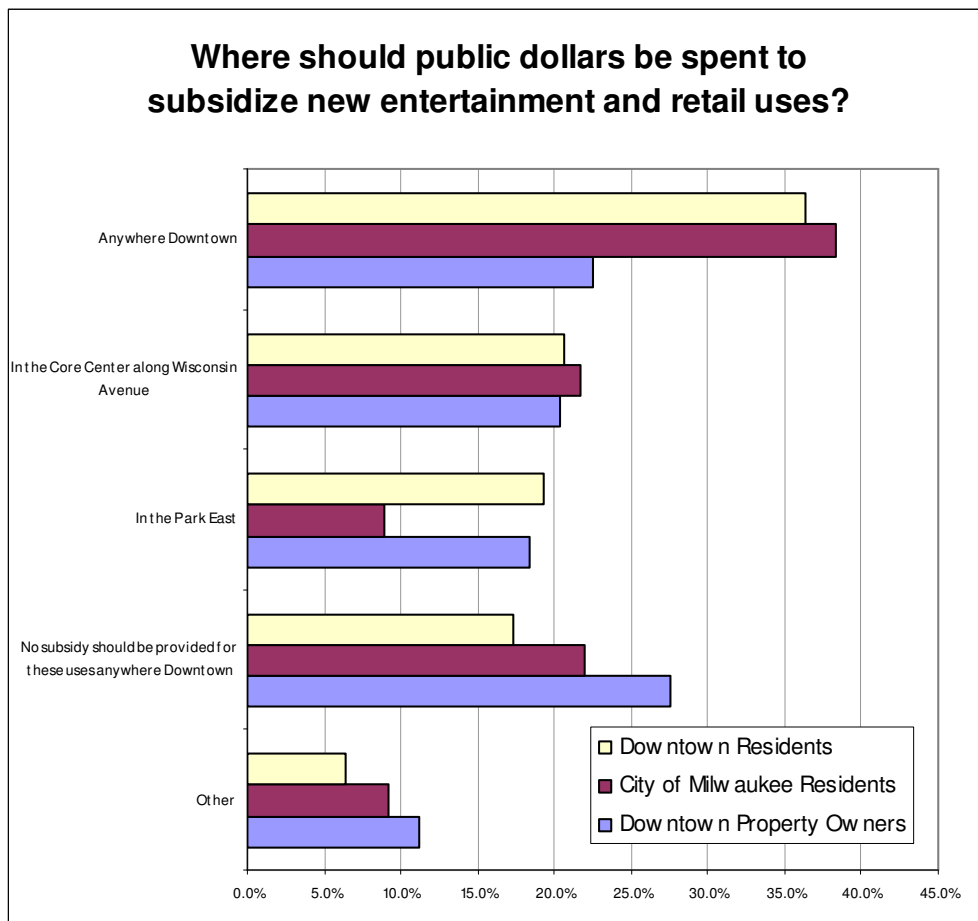
- Fewer than 5% of survey respondents identified themselves as downtown business owners, and fewer than 5% of respondents reported owning downtown property. 60% of downtown business owners who took the survey reported that they did not own property downtown.
- Of downtown property owners who took the survey, 78% of own residential property, 26% own commercial property, and 13% own mixed use property.
- 51% of downtown business owners reported locating downtown to serve a client base, 45% cited proximity to compatible services, 44% the prestige of a downtown location and 42% cited the availability of entertainment and dining options for employees and clients.
- High rent, parking issues and ease of transportation were the top reasons businesses decided to locate outside of downtown.

Downtown Business and Development



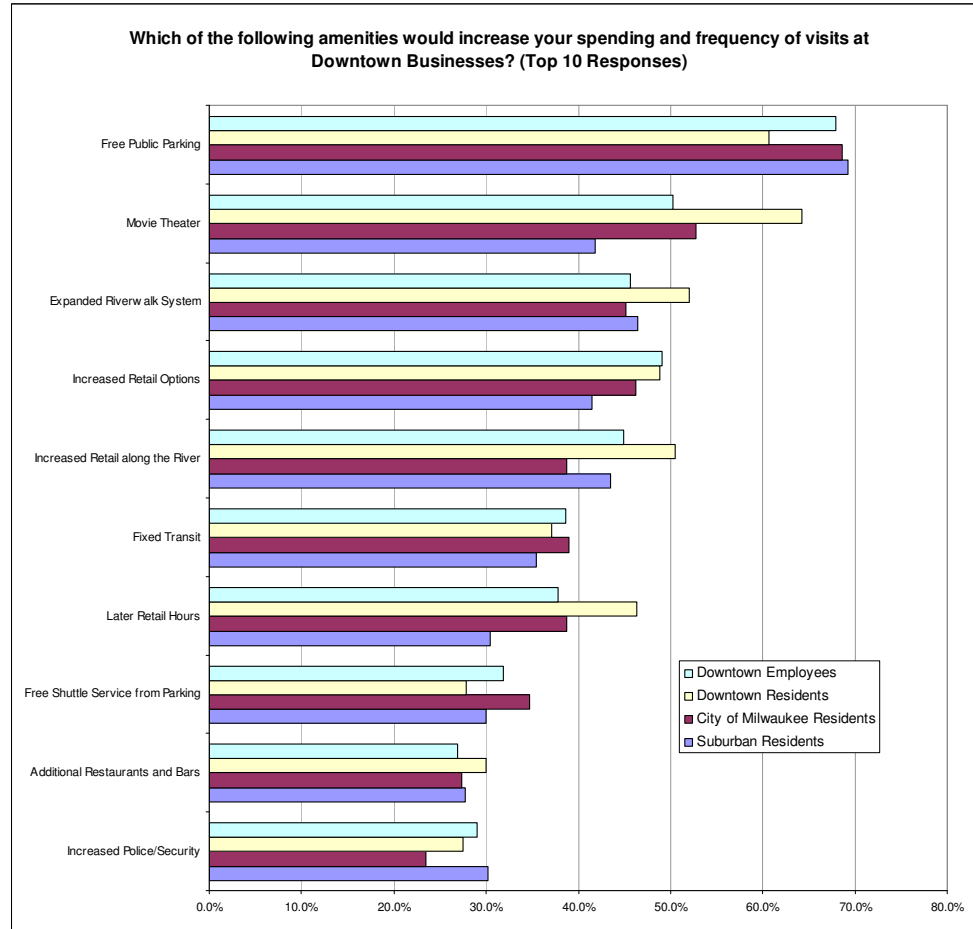
- When asked what is needed, all respondent groups tended to agree that a movie theater is key. This was most important to property owners and residents of downtown. Gas stations were another top suggestion, especially among business owners, employees, and suburban residents.
- A large department store would be welcomed, especially by business and property owners.
- Big box developments like Target and Wal-Mart would be well received by property owners and employees. However, 10% of the posted comments suggested a preference toward Target and, in many cases, hostility toward Wal-Mart. Several proponents of a Target mentioned a preference to contemporary architecture typical of many urban Target developments.
- A smaller group commented that they would prefer no big box developments at all.

Downtown Business and Development



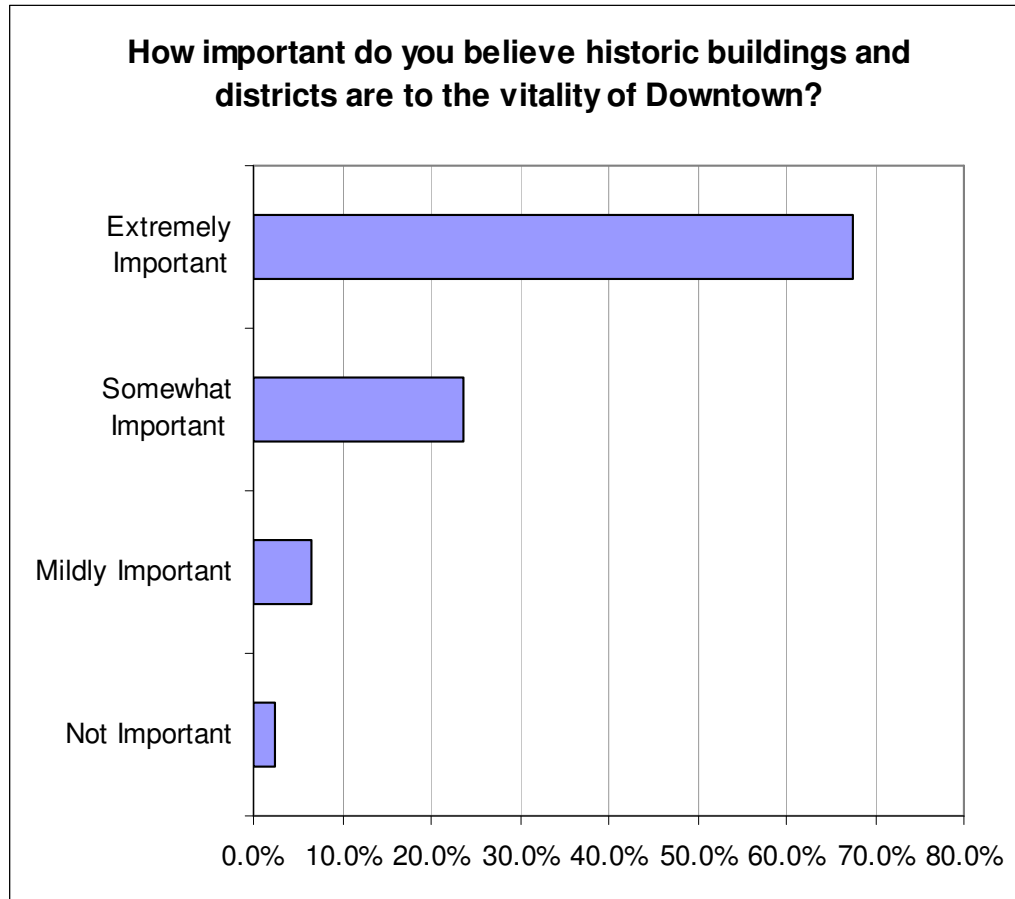
- Current business and property owners opposed public subsidy for entertainment and retail developments, however, residents of downtown and the surrounding area seemed to agree that such subsidy should be available throughout downtown (not only the central core).
- 48% of all respondents said public funding should not be available for new retail and office development.
- 52% of all respondents said funding should be provided for such projects, and a majority of these respondents said it should be available in all areas of downtown (not just the central core).

Downtown Business and Development



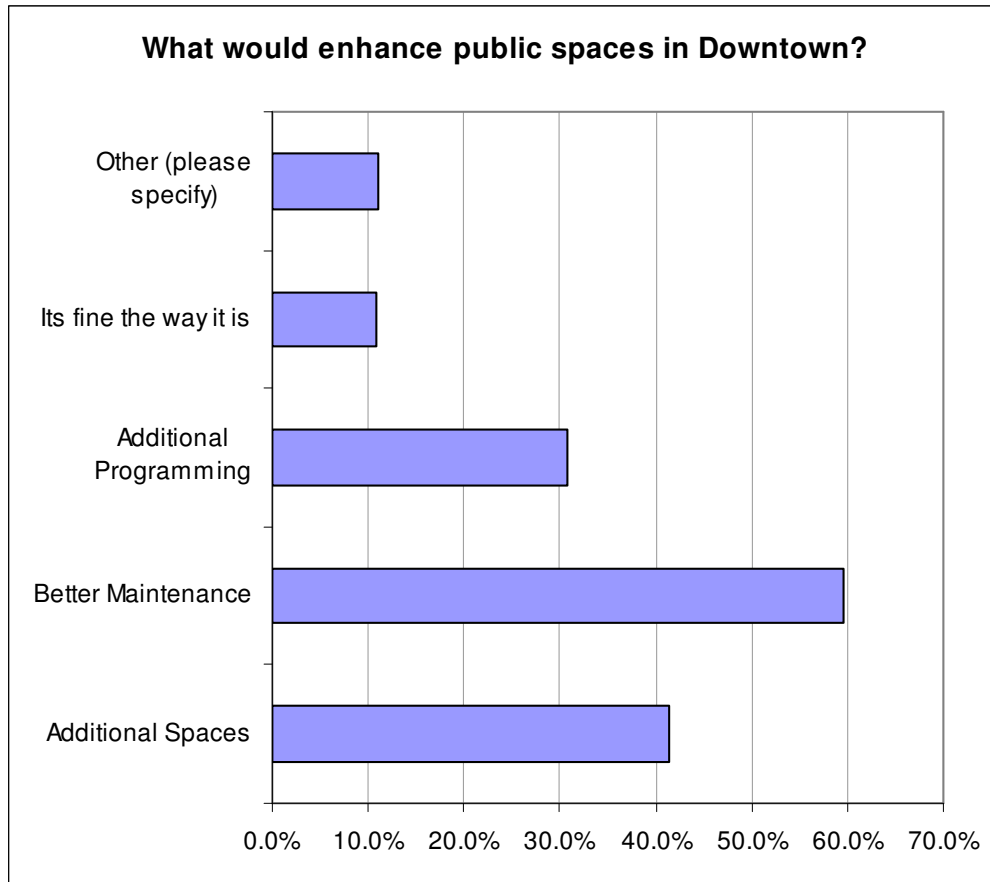
- Looking at where downtown employees spend their money, top results include restaurants (96%), grocery stores/markets (70%) and bars (70%). All of these establishments, particularly grocery stores, are visited much more frequently by those who live downtown.
- When asked what actions would encourage them to increase their use of businesses and institutions within the downtown, top responses were an increase in the variety of products sold (72%), improved appearance of storefronts (50%), increased quality of products (47%), and longer store hours (46%).
- When asked what amenities would increase spending and frequency of visits to downtown businesses, top results were free public parking (67%), a movie theater (50%), an expanded Riverwalk system (48%), and Increased retail options (44%).

Downtown Buildings



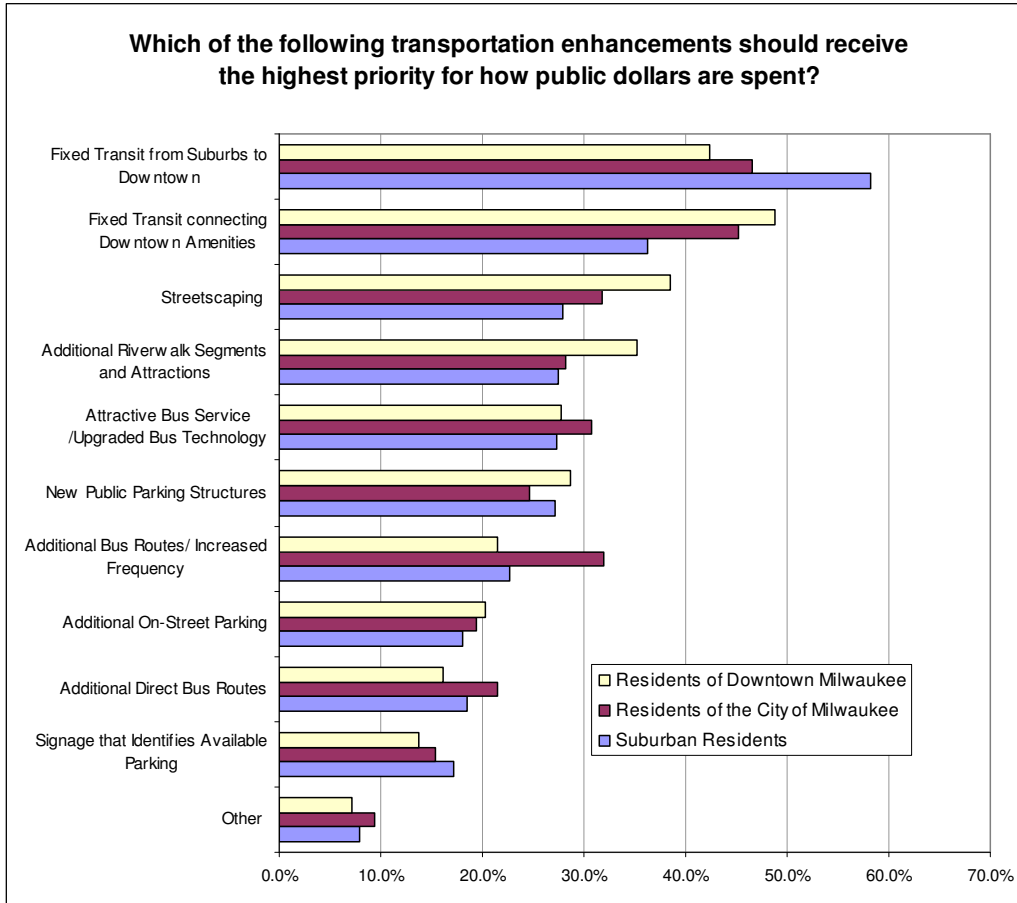
- 68% of respondents thought that historic buildings and districts are extremely important to the vitality of downtown. 30% thought they were somewhat important, and only 2% thought that they were not important.
- Nearly 96% of all respondents said they considered the rehabilitation of existing buildings as or more important than new construction.
- Nearly 58% of all respondents said public funding should be available for historic preservation in all areas of downtown.
- Nearly 37% of all respondents said building height should not be restricted while 46% said it should be restricted only in certain areas.
- Downtown residents were the biggest proponents of height restrictions in certain areas. These areas include along the lakefront (62%), on the east side (44%) and along the river (44%).

Downtown Public Spaces



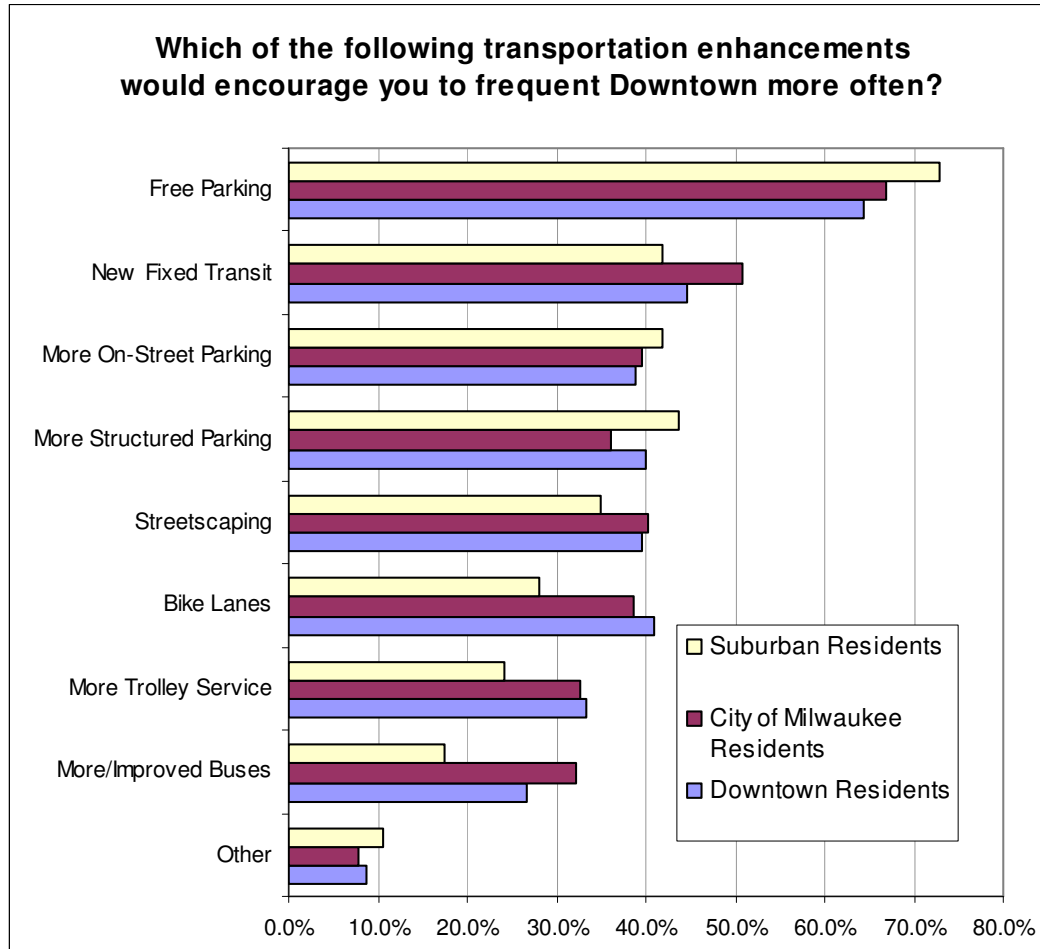
- When asked what would enhance public spaces in downtown, 60% of all respondents and 64% of downtown residents said better maintenance.
- 40% of downtown residents said that additional public spaces are needed
- 11% of all respondents said that Downtown public spaces are fine the way they are.
- 72% of all respondents support the private leasing of public spaces, as is the case with Starbucks in Red Arrow Park. However, some downtown (21%) and city (23%) residents expressed an interest in restricting this along the lakefront.
- Less than 9% of all respondents were completely against the private leasing of public space.

Transportation and Parking



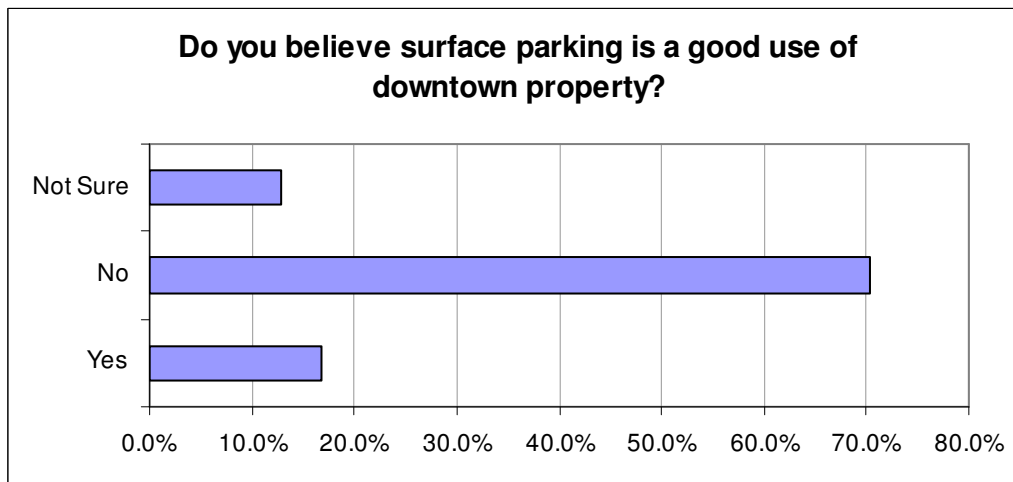
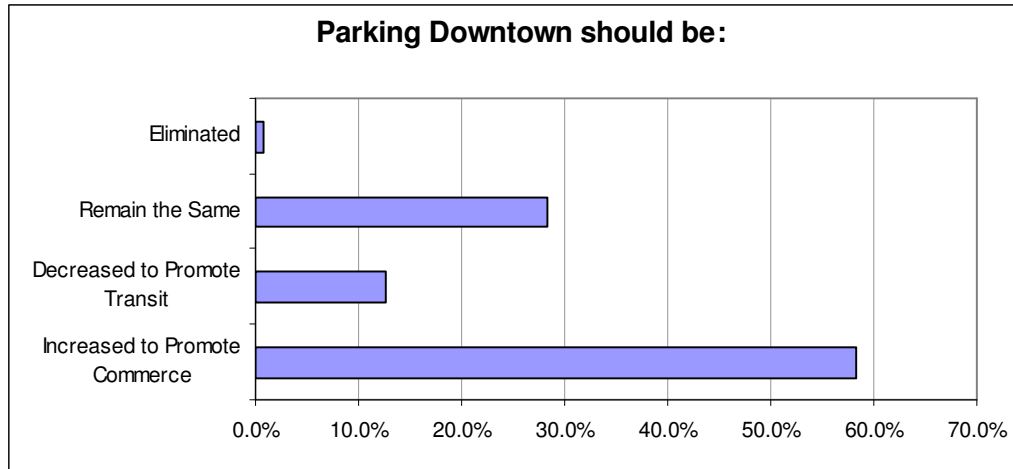
- 97% of respondents who work downtown but live outside the city of Milwaukee reported that they drive personal automobiles to work.
- Nearly 60% of respondents who work downtown but live outside the city placed fixed transit from the suburbs as one of their top three suggestions for how to use public transportation dollars.
- 77% of respondents who lived downtown still list their car as one of the methods they use to get to downtown destinations. Nearly 60% listed walking, with about 22% listing either buses or bikes as one of their transportation methods.
- Downtown residents also expressed a desire for fixed transit. Among this group, the top two suggestions for how to spend public transportation dollars were fixed transit connecting downtown amenities (49%) and fixed transit from the suburbs (43%).

Transportation and Parking



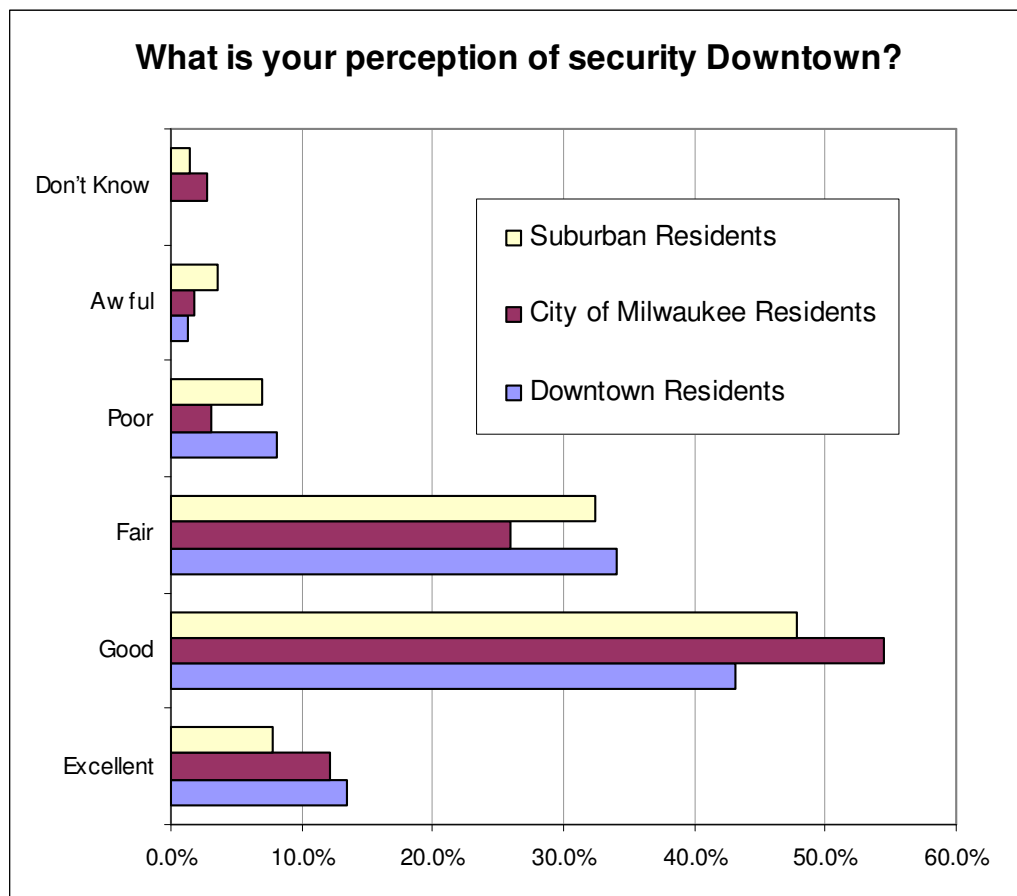
- Over 46% of all respondents reported that fixed transit would encourage them to visit downtown more frequently, second only to free parking. Other suggested enhancements include additional on-street and structured parking, streetscaping, and bike lanes. These enhancements were each suggested by 35-40% of all those surveyed.
- More than 49% of all respondents listed cleaner, new technology as something that would entice them to use transit more frequently in general. This is especially true among downtown residents, 58% of whom suggested such improvements.
- 55% of City of Milwaukee residents identified a desire for transit service that is available more frequently.
- Nearly 52% of Downtown employees who live outside of the city suggested more direct routes, while only 44% suggested greater frequency.

Transportation and Parking



- 31% of all respondents believed that there is sufficient parking downtown and 54% of respondents believed that there was not sufficient parking.
- Over 44% of respondents felt that parking downtown was not adequately marked by signage. 39% believed that signage for parking was adequate.
- 60% of respondents thought that parking should be increased, 12% thought parking should be decreased and 27% thought parking should remain the same.
- 64% of all respondents thought that surface parking was not a good use of downtown property and only 18% thought surface parking was a good use of downtown property.
- When asked how parking for new developments should be provided, 75% of all respondents said that parking decks should be shared among developments.

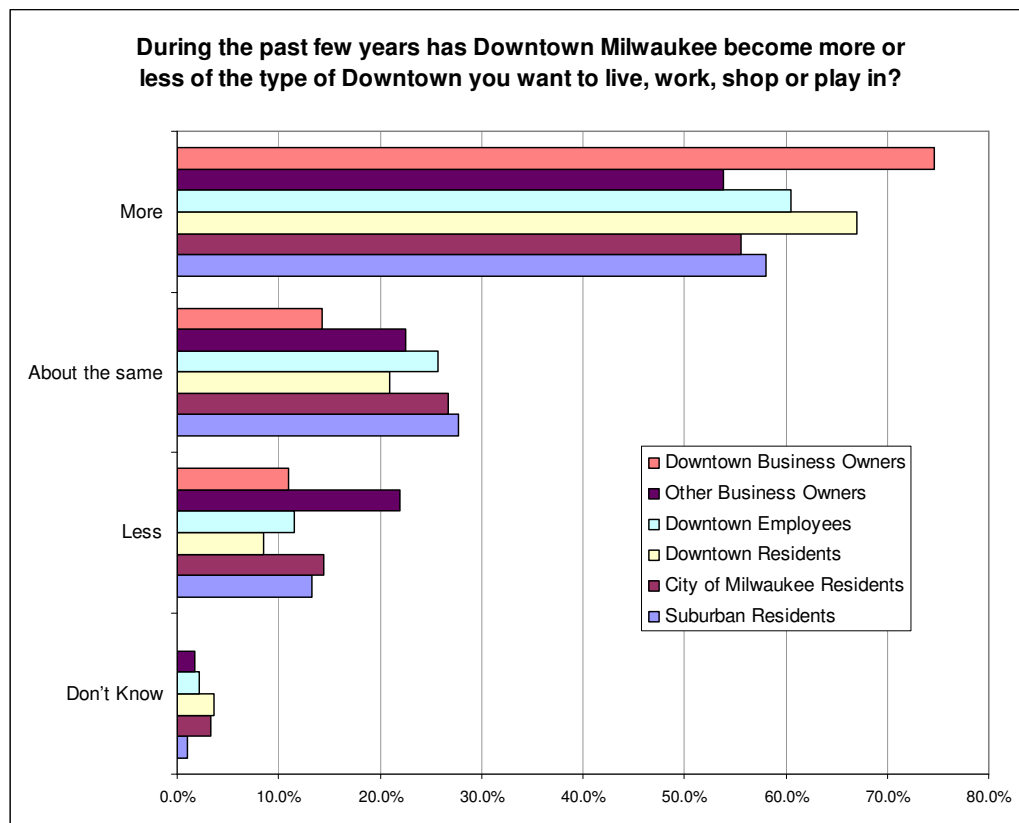
Downtown Security



- Only 6% of survey respondents had a “poor” perception of downtown security. Even fewer, 2%, said downtown security was “awful.”
- Most respondents had a generally positive perception of security, with 49% calling it “good” and 10% calling it “excellent.”
- The groups that tend to have the most positive view of downtown security are city residents, those over the age of 35 (including those 55 and older), and males.
- Suburban residents and females have a more negative view of downtown security, but over 56% of respondents in both of these groups still consider security “good” or “excellent.”
- Respondents under the age of 25 had the most negative view of downtown security, with only 42% calling downtown security “good.” Still, only 13% of respondents in this age group considered security less than “fair.”

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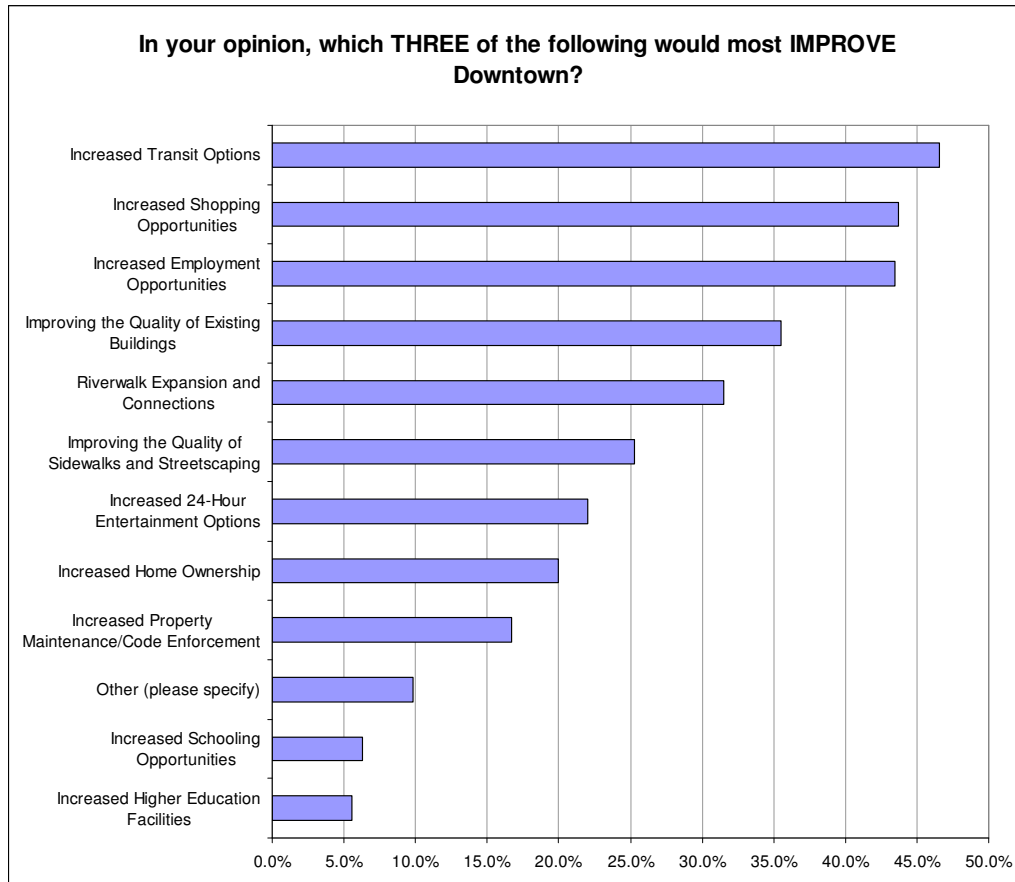
Downtown Image



- Over 59% of those surveyed reported that over the past few years downtown Milwaukee has become more of the type of downtown they want to live, work, shop, or play in.
- Downtown business and property owners are even more satisfied, with 75% suggesting that downtown has improved.
- As for downtown residents, 67% agree the area has gotten better.
- Only about 56% of city residents and 59% of suburban residents however feel downtown has improved, and 22% of business owners located outside of downtown feel downtown has gotten worse.
- Over 50% of downtown residents and property owners either “agree” or “strongly agree” that in the next 25 years downtown Milwaukee will be “one of the most dynamic and interesting” places to live, work, shop, be entertained and conduct business in the entire U.S.

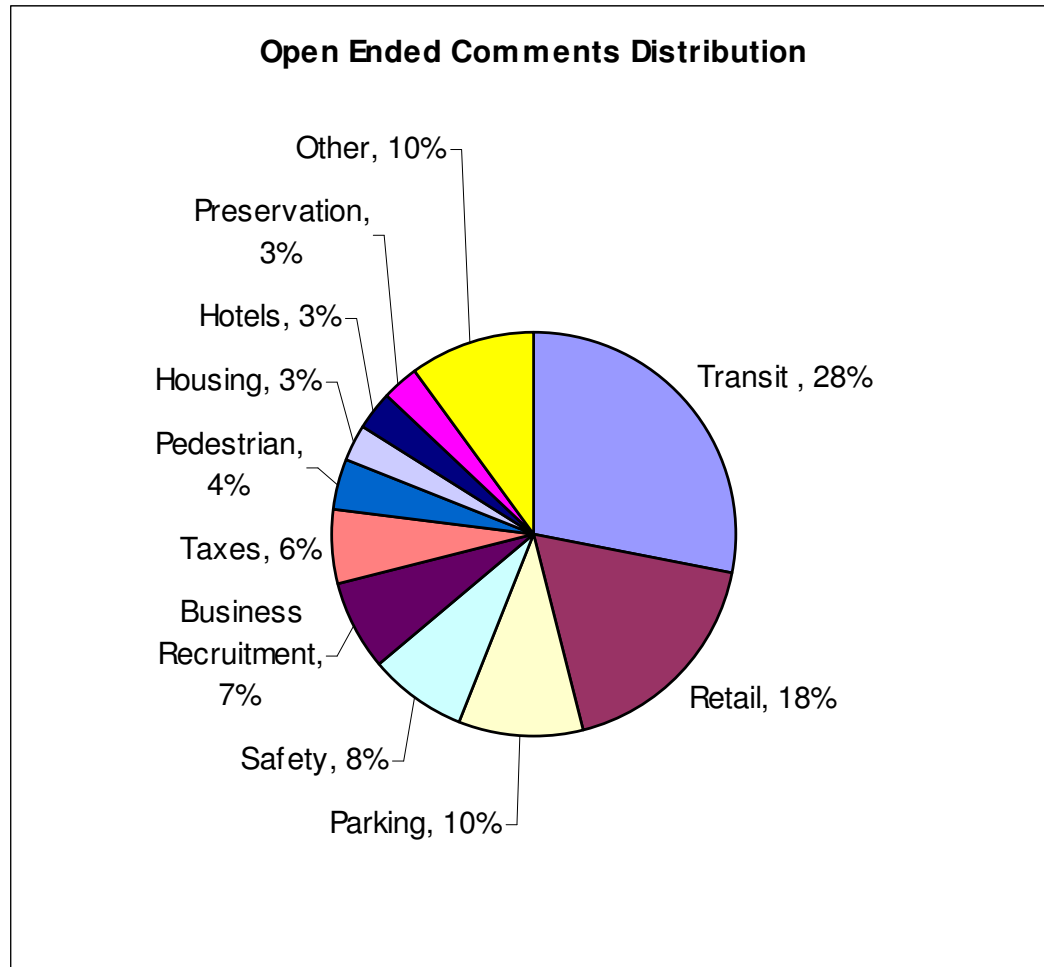
2008 DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Downtown Image



- 30% of those 25 and under feel Milwaukee has not significantly changed in recent years.
- 26-34 year olds are the most optimistic about the future of downtown.
- Survey Respondents were asked to name the top three improvements that would most improve downtown. The most popular response was increased transit options (47%).
- In fact, when given the opportunity to make additional open-ended comments regarding the future of downtown Milwaukee, over 28% of the suggestions specifically mentioned transit improvements. Many specifically mentioned the addition of fixed commuter rail as vital to the future of downtown and the city as a whole.
- Increased shopping opportunities (44%) and increased employment (43%) were some of the other top responses.

Open-Ended Comments



- At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to provide any additional comments, thoughts or ideas regarding the future of downtown.
- Of the 693 people who provided open-ended comments, 197 of them provided comments directly related to improving transit (28%).
- 122 respondents (18%) provided comments that identified a lack of retail as an issue.
- 71 respondents (10%) provided comments related to parking availability, control or pricing.
- Other issues that respondents wrote about the most were public safety, business recruitment, high taxes, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, housing, hotels, the preservation of iconic buildings, skyline and High-rise development and the improvement of schools.

Open-Ended Comments

“Downtown is not just a destination anymore, it is home, and the concept of home should remain the focus for new development”

“Fixed transit would be great.”

“If there were better transportation options, I would do more shopping in downtown”

“It is vitally important to have a healthy, safe downtown.”

“Safety and parking are the number one reasons people I speak to avoid downtown.”

“The future for the city of Milwaukee is finding ways to provide excellent public transportation for residents coming from within and outside of the city to downtown.”

“Go green. Fixed transit is one of the hallmarks of progressive cities.”

“Attracting retail, specifically national chains, should be a priority for the city... it’s a pain driving to the ‘burbs for retail options”

Open-Ended Comments

“Stop expanding highways and invest in light rail and busses that are a pleasure to ride in. That would decrease the need to take up valuable land for parking lots.”

“As a community, we should encourage people to live, work and play downtown... as well as provide a better fixed transportation system to get to and around the city. Don’t build any more parking structures or lots.”

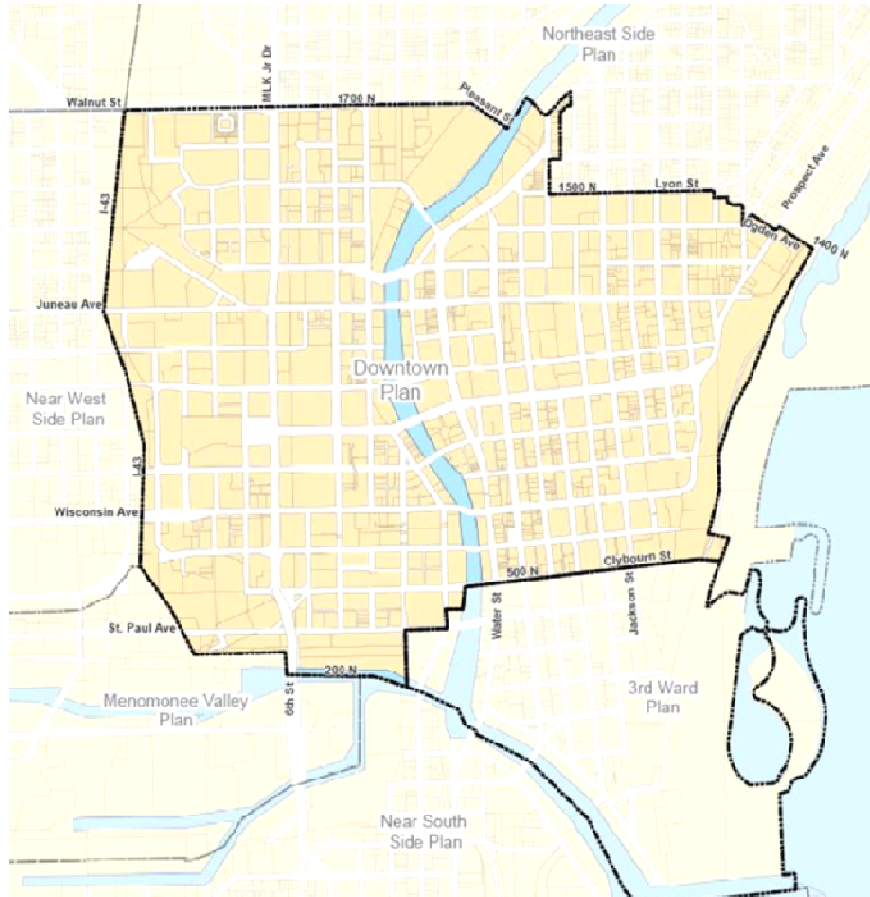
“...Downtown needs frequent transit to surrounding neighborhoods and a rail option for commuter travel.”

“Car use is important to many who want to come downtown. Increase the parking.”

“It would be nice to see more police in the area, especially at night.”

“Make Milwaukee more than a collection of silent office buildings... structure Milwaukee like a first class city and it will act like one.”

Contact Information



For more Information about the 2008 Downtown Community Survey or the Downtown Area Plan and future opportunities to give input, visit the downtown plan website at:

www.mkedcd.org/downtownplan

Or Contact:

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Milwaukee WI 53201
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The Downtown Community Survey was open to all members of the public and does not represent a scientific sample of the population.